



City of Aurora

2nd Floor Council
Chambers
44 East Downer Place
Aurora, Illinois 60505
www.aurora-il.org

Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

Wednesday

January 02, 2019

7:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Truax called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

The following Commission members were present: Chairman Truax, Mrs. Anderson, Mr. Cameron, Mr. Chambers, Mrs. Cole, Mr. Divine, Mrs. Duncan, Mr. Hull, Mr. Reynolds and Ms. Tidwell. Mrs. Head and Mr. Pilmer called in and excused themselves from the meeting. Mrs. Owusu-Safo was absent.

OTHERS PRESENT

The following staff members were present: Mr. Sieben, Mrs. Vacek and Mrs. Jackson.

Others Present: Israel Lemus (Illinois Velocity Restoration, LLC), Kristin Bernstein (Ameresco, Inc.) and Dan Veriotti (TRC Environmental Corporation).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

18-1143

Approval of the Minutes for the Planning Commission meeting of December 12, 2018.

A motion was made by Mrs. Anderson, seconded by Mrs. Cole, that the minutes be approved and filed. The motion carried.

18-1168

Approval of the Minutes for the Planning Commission meeting on December 19, 2018.

A motion was made by Mrs. Anderson, seconded by Mr. Cameron, that the minutes be approved and filed. The motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Truax said if you are here for an item that does not have a public hearing and you wish to speak to the Commission, we can give you 3 minutes to do so.

No one came forward.

AGENDA

18-1078

An Ordinance Amending Ordinance Number 3100, being the Aurora Zoning Ordinance and the Zoning Map attached thereto, by Rezoning the Property located at 260 South LaSalle Street from R-4, Two-Family Dwelling District to R-3, One Family-Dwelling District (Illinois Velocity Restoration, LLC - 18-1078 / AU27/1-18.008-DZ - SB - Ward 2) (PUBLIC HEARING)

Mrs. Vacek said the Petitioner is requesting to downzone the property at 260 S. LaSalle from R-4 Two Family Dwelling District to R-3 One Family Dwelling District. The subject is, again, located at 260 S. LaSalle Street. The lot area of the property is 5,663 square feet with a width of 33 feet. Therefore, the property is legal non-conforming. With that being said, there was a fire in the summer 2017. This was utilized as a 2 unit. The Petitioner is looking to downzone the structure to a single family as a result of that fire, so we are just now going through the process to downzone it to match what the use will be. The Petitioner is here, so if you have any questions, I would be happy to turn it over to him or if you have any question for me I can answer them.

The Petitioner was sworn in.

My name I Israel Lemus. I'm the President of Illinois Velocity Restoration and we are the contractor who is planning to do this construction and repairs on this house, as she already explained, because of a fire in 2017. I have no questions at all. I don't know if you have some questions for me.

The public input portion of the public hearing was opened. No witnesses came forward. The public input portion of the public hearing was closed.

Mrs. Vacek said staff would recommend approval of the Ordinance amending Ordinance Number 3100, being the Aurora Zoning Ordinance and the Zoning Map attached thereto, by rezoning the property located at 260 S. LaSalle Street from R-4 to R-3.

MOTION OF APPROVAL WAS MADE BY: Mrs. Anderson

MOTION SECONDED BY: Mr. Hull

AYES: Mrs. Anderson, Mr. Cameron, Mr. Chambers, Mrs. Cole, Mr. Divine, Mrs. Duncan, Mr. Hull, Mr. Reynolds, Ms. Tidwell

NAYS: None

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Is the proposal in accordance with all applicable official physical development policies and other related official plans and policies of the City of Aurora?

Mrs. Cole said these were listed in the staff report.

2. Does the proposal represent the logical establishment and/or consistent extension of the requested classification in consideration of the existing land uses, existing zoning classifications, and essential character of the general area of the property in question?

Mr. Reynolds said the proposal does represent the highest and best use of the property.

3. Is the proposal consistent with a desirable trend of development in the general area of the property in question, occurring since the property in question was placed in its present zoning classification, desirability being defined as the trend's consistency with applicable official physical development policies and other related official plans and policies of the City of Aurora?

Mr. Reynolds said again, the proposal represents the highest and best use of the property.

4. Will the proposal maintain a compatible relationship with the traffic pattern and traffic volume of adjacent streets and not have an adverse effect upon traffic or pedestrian movement and safety in the general area of the property in question?

Mr. Chambers said the traffic volume and pattern should not change and it should not have an adverse effect.

5. Will the proposal allow for the provision of adequate public services and facilities to the property in question and have no adverse effect upon existing public services and facilities?

Mr. Cameron said those services are already in place.

6. Does the proposal take adequate measures or will they be taken to provide ingress and egress so designed as to maximize pedestrian and vehicular circulation ease and safety, minimize traffic congestion, and not substantially increase the congestion in the public streets?

Mr. Chambers said there shouldn't be a change here.

7a. Is the rezoning a consistent extension of the existing land uses, existing zoning classifications, and essential character of the general area?

Mrs. Cole said it is.

7b. Will the rezoning permit uses which are more suitable than uses permitted under the existing zoning classification?

Chairman Truax said I think downzoning is generally preferable in situations like this, so it is more suitable than uses permitted.

Mrs. Vacek said this will next be heard at the Planning and Development Committee on Thursday, January 10, 2019, at 4:00 p.m. on the fifth floor of this building.

A motion was made by Mrs. Anderson, seconded by Mr. Hull, that this agenda item be Forwarded to the Planning & Development Committee, on the agenda for 1/10/2019. The motion carried.

18-1147

An Ordinance Approving a Revision to the Plan Description on 17.99 Acres for Property located at Northeast corner of Route 25 and Sullivan Road to allow Alternative Energy Systems as a primary use (Ameresco,

Inc. - 18-1147 / AU10/1-18.214-Su/R/Fpn - TV - Ward 1) (PUBLIC HEARING)

See Attachment for Items 18-1147 and 18-1148.

A motion was made by Mrs. Cole, seconded by Mr. Chambers, that this agenda item be Forwarded to the Planning & Development Committee, on the agenda for 1/10/2019. The motion carried.

18-1148

A Resolution Approving a Final Plan on the property located at Northeast corner of Route 25 and Sullivan Road for Solar Farm (Ameresco, Inc. - 18-1148 / AU10/1-18.214-Su/R/Fpn - TV - Ward 1)

See Attachment for Items 18-1147 and 18-1148.

A motion was made by Mr. Chambers, seconded by Mrs. Cole, that this agenda item be Forwarded to the Planning & Development Committee, on the agenda for 1/10/2019. The motion carried.

ATTACHMENT FOR ITEMS 18-1147 and 18-1148

18-1147 An Ordinance approving a Revision to the Plan Description on 17.99 acres for property located at the northeast corner of Route 25 and Sullivan Road to allow Alternative Energy Systems as a primary use (Ameresco, Inc. – 18-1147 / AU10/1-18.214-Su/R/Fpn – TV – Ward 1) (PUBLIC HEARING)

Mrs. Vacek said in efforts to implement the Clean Energy Initiatives and take advantage of the State Renewable Energy Credit, the City of Aurora did a request of proposal and selected the Petitioner to evaluate city owned properties and then come up with a site that they could do a solar farm on. The subject property at the northeast corner of Sullivan and Illinois Route 25 was the one that was actually decided upon. There is a lease agreement that is being considered by City Council with the Petitioner as we speak. With that, the Petitioner is requesting a Plan Description Revision to the Special Use Planned Development. The modifications of the Plan Description include adding alternative energy limited to freestanding solar energy systems as a primary use on Lot 2. In addition, the alternative energy systems would be required to adhere to Section 4.4-9 of the AZO. There are a few exceptions within that section, obviously allowing it as a primary use is one of the exceptions. It would be including that the systems would be allowed in all of the yards. Right now it is limited to just like interior rear and interior side. We would allow it within all of the yards, the front yard, the side yards, exterior sides and such, and then reducing the minimum clearance between the lowest point of the system and the surface on which the system is mounted from 8 feet to 36 inches. They are lower, so they are not above your head. They are actually closer to the ground and then allowing the energy that is produced through this system to be sold to utility providers or to be sold to community solar subscribers within the same utility boundary or territory. The second part of it is that they are doing a Final Plan. The details, again, include the construction of a solar farm. The system will utilize 6,480 Tier 1 solar panels with a ballasted racking system so that the cap of the landfill is not disturbed. I'll turn it over to the Petitioner and they can kind of go into a little bit more detail about that, unless you have any other questions for me.

The Petitioners were sworn in.

Hi. I'm Kristin Bernstein. I'm with Ameresco. Our goal here is to develop a 1.8

megawatt community solar array. So the power would be sold to community solar subscribers, including potentially the City of Aurora to take 40% of the power, as well as other municipal non-profit entities. This array will, as she said, be ballasted so it will sit on top of the landfill instead of penetrating the landfill preventing any disturbance of the current cap. In addition, the ballasts are actually wire baskets with large racks so that it doesn't create extra impermeable surfaces at the site. We are currently working with the Illinois Power Agency, the Adjustable Block Program, to enter this project to incur incentives to help make it more economically feasible for the city. In addition, the city will receive benefits from both the revenue of a lease agreement as well as energy savings.

Ms. Tidwell said can you describe again who will be purchasing this energy?

Ms. Bernstein said so it will be purchased by subscribers within ComEd territory. We are limited to allowing a single entity to take 40% of the power, so our first 40% would be, our intention is the City of Aurora. We generally work with non-profit and municipal entities, so we would look at nearby municipalities, school districts, customers with a large variety of accounts, but focusing on their smaller city accounts.

Ms. Tidwell said will the cost of the energy be comparable to what they are paying now for other sources?

Ms. Bernstein said it will be less than what they are paying now.

Mrs. Anderson said will that savings be like right away, or is it over time?

Ms. Bernstein said the power does have an escalation factor matching what we've seen in the utilities, but it is an initial reduction from their power, so they will immediately see a savings on it.

Mrs. Cole said in your reports you say that there will only need to be someone there to service these approximately once a year, but there is a question on one of the forms you fill out that asks about the number of STE's that this job is going to create.

Ms. Bernstein said so that was for construction jobs.

Mrs. Cole said okay, that's what I was going to ask. Is that for construction jobs?

Ms. Bernstein said yes it was.

Mrs. Cole said those would be short-term once is it constructed?

Ms. Bernstein said yes.

Mrs. Cole said and what is the estimated time to construct?

Ms. Bernstein said the project has to be constructed within 18 months of the rec awards. It is a little bit depending on weather. It will not be 18 full months of actual construction though.

Mrs. Cole said this is an excellent site for this.

Ms. Bernstein said we are very excited about this site. We think it is a great opportunity.

Chairman Truax said so are there other projects in the area that have been completed? Is this the first one?

Ms. Bernstein said in terms of community solar, these large scale projects, there aren't any in Illinois yet. We have done 10 smaller projects on school rooftops. We have about 6 in the Joliet/Plainfield area and then another 4 down outside of Bloomington. We've worked in 3 different utilities and have about 3.6 megawatts total in Illinois right now.

Mr. Cameron said the mounting system, and I understand the reason is because that area is capped and you don't want to penetrate that, but what are the wind velocity ratings and what is the engineered pattern for that in terms it doesn't go flying off?

Good evening. My name is Dan Veriotti. I'm a licensed Professional Engineer in Illinois. We worked this year on about 300 sites in Illinois in various stages, so planning and engineering for solar farms. I've seen a lot honestly, but for this type of system usually in Illinois we are worried about the uplift created by the tornados. Usually in Illinois we are looking at 105 to 115 miles per hour, so that would be the typical rating. We also worry about hail, which is the second most damaging thing. Typically these panels are pretty solid. They are encapsulated in very good tamper glass material. I know it is a little bit funny, but sometimes the way they test these, they shoot golf balls at the panels to see how they perform. So 105 to 115, but I've seen sometimes even more than that. Down south, especially Kankakee, that's the area where most of the tornados go for some reason and that's where we think it is going to be over 120 miles an hour rating for just that area, but in here we should be looking at 105 to 115.

Chairman Truax said security at the site. Can you talk a minute about making sure that it stays secure?

Ms. Bernstein said the site is completely fenced in, both for security as well as electrical code reasons. It will remain locked when we are not there. They are 7 foot fences, so it should prevent most people from going on. We've not had security concerns in our large arrays in other areas outside the state, so we feel that's usually sufficient.

Mrs. Anderson said will they require regular services ever or just when one may go down for some reason?

Ms. Bernstein said it is about once a year maintenance. They may be out there once or twice mowing the lawn just to shorten if it gets tall, but that's minimal. The once a year checkup is just to make sure all the electrical connections are still tight and there are no hot wires or anything unusual that needs to be corrected. But very minimal maintenance.

Mr. Veriotti said also I wanted add for the electrical equipment, everything is kind of monitored online, so remotely done. If there is anything out of the ordinary happening with the system, we'll know right away and that's, obviously, when we send somebody to the site right then.

The public input portion of the public hearing was opened. No witnesses came forward. The public input portion of the public hearing was closed.

Mrs. Vacek said staff would recommend approval of the Ordinance approving a Revision to the Plan Description on 17.99 acres for the property located at the northeast corner of Route 25 and Sullivan Road to allow Alternative Energy Systems as a primary use.

MOTION OF APPROVAL WAS MADE BY: Mrs. Cole

MOTION SECONDED BY: Mr. Chambers

AYES: Mrs. Anderson, Mr. Cameron, Mr. Chambers, Mrs. Cole, Mr. Divine, Mrs. Duncan, Mr. Hull, Mr. Reynolds, Ms. Tidwell

NAYS: None

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Is the proposal in accordance with all applicable official physical development policies and other related official plans and policies of the City of Aurora?

Mrs. Cole said these were listed in the staff report.

2. Does the proposal represent the logical establishment and/or consistent extension of the requested classification in consideration of the existing land uses, existing zoning classifications, and essential character of the general area of the property in question?

Mr. Reynolds said the proposal does represent the highest and best use of the property.

3. Is the proposal consistent with a desirable trend of development in the general area of the property in question, occurring since the property in question was placed in its present zoning classification, desirability being defined as the trend's consistency with applicable official physical development policies and other related official plans and policies of the City of Aurora?

Mr. Reynolds said again, the proposal represents the highest and best use of the property.

4. Will the proposal maintain a compatible relationship with the traffic pattern and traffic volume of adjacent streets and not have an adverse effect upon traffic or pedestrian movement and safety in the general area of the property in question?

Mr. Chambers said with very little maintenance required for the area, there should not be any adverse effect on the traffic pattern.

5. Will the proposal allow for the provision of adequate public services and facilities to the property in question and have no adverse effect upon existing public services and facilities?

Ms. Tidwell said to the extent that that's applicable, there should be no adverse effect.

6. Does the proposal take adequate measures or will they be taken to provide ingress and egress so designed as to maximize pedestrian and vehicular circulation ease and safety, minimize traffic congestion, and not substantially increase the congestion in the public streets?

Chairman Truax said again, this is a relatively isolated site in which pedestrian and

vehicular circulation should not be an issue.

9a. Will the special use not preclude the normal and orderly development of improvement of surrounding properties due to the saturation or concentration of similar uses in the general area?

Mrs. Cole said there are no similar uses within miles and this was an old dump site literally, so this is a wonderful use for this piece of property.

9b. Is the special use in all other respects in conformance to the applicable regulations in the district in which it is located, except as such regulations may in each instance be modified by the City Council pursuant to the recommendations of the Plan Commission?

Chairman Truax said I believe it conforms in all other respects.

Mrs. Vacek said this will next be heard at the Planning and Development Committee on Thursday, January 10, 2019, at 4:00 p.m. on the fifth floor of this building.

18-1148 A Resolution approving a Final Plan on the property located at the northeast corner of Route 25 and Sullivan Road for a Solar Farm (Ameresco, Inc. – 18-1148 / AU10/1-18.214-Su/R/Fpn – TV – Ward 1)

Mrs. Vacek said staff would recommend conditional approval of a Resolution approving a Final Plan on the property located at the northeast corner of Route 25 and Sullivan Road for a Solar Farm with the following condition:

- 1. That the documents be revised to incorporate the Engineering staff's comments including in the memo dated December 31, 2018 prior to the building permit issuance and shall be contingent upon the Final Engineering approval.*

MOTION OF CONDITIONAL APPROVAL WAS MADE BY: Mr. Chambers

MOTION SECONDED BY: Mrs. Cole

AYES: Mrs. Anderson, Mr. Cameron, Mr. Chambers, Mrs. Cole, Mr. Divine, Mrs. Duncan, Mr. Hull, Mr. Reynolds, Ms. Tidwell

NAYS: None

Mrs. Vacek said this will next be heard at the Planning and Development Committee on Thursday, January 10, 2019, at 4:00 p.m. on the fifth floor of this building.

PENDING

COMMITTEE REPORTS

A) Amendments

B) Grant and Award Research

C) Comprehensive Plan

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Sieben said just kind of a housekeeping item. As you may know, we've been working with the Mayor's office with Alex Voight, she is one of the assistants to the Mayor, on cleaning up a bunch of the standing committees and commissions, making sure the members are up to date and things like that. So we've been working with her on that and also making sure we try to keep up to date on reappointments or new appointments and things like that. That hadn't been done for a few years, so we are trying to do that, but related to that, I know usually around this time of year there is a vote amongst the Planning Commission for the Chairman. However, as we were going through the actual ordinance, if you recall, Stephane made a bunch of changes back in June of 2014 where she was looking at trying to codify a lot of the Commissions and Boards, the ones that we deal with, and one of the items related to the Chairman is that the Chairman is actually to be appointed by the Mayor, not internally within the Board. It says the Chairman of the Planning Commission shall be appointed by the Mayor for a period of 1 year or until his or her successor has been duly appointed. So we are working with the Mayor's office on that. I guess it is just status quo for the time being until that would occur. Once that would occur, I believe the Board then can vote on a Vice Chair and a Second like you have been doing before. Instead of sending an e-mail, I just wanted to let everyone know that.

Mr. Sieben said our next meeting will be January 16th.

Mr. Sieben said one other housecleaning item. I'm not 100% sure yet it will be on the 16th, but very, very soon we are going to be bringing forward some zoning text amendments.

Mrs. Vacek said actually the Mayor's office has set up a Special Committee for any Text Amendments to things, so it actually will not come before Planning Commission. It will actually come before the Special Committee.

Mr. Sieben said it is brand new. It is an Ordinance Review Committee, but I guess for your sake, there's been discussion that the Findings of Fact are fairly long when they were modified about 3, 4 or 5 years ago the same time as these. We are looking at streamlining those just to let you know. That might be a future improvement.

Mrs. Cole said Ed I have a question. I heard a rumor today that the Carsons building on Lake Street has been sold and that they are looking at putting storage units in there. Is that a true rumor?

Mr. Sieben said I don't know if that is true or not. We have had discussions with a potential buyer, but nothing has been formally submitted to us. I don't know if there is a sale or not, but nothing formally has come forward.

Mrs. Cole said do they have the zoning?

Mr. Sieben said that would have to come in for a Special Use. We have not heard anything in the last couple of months or so, so I'm not sure.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Ms. Tidwell, seconded by Mrs. Anderson, that the meeting be adjourned. The motion carried by voice vote. Chairman Truax

adjourned the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

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